

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 SINGAP 05033 181101Z
ACTION EA-12

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FM AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE
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S E C R E T SINGAPORE 5033

STADIS////////////////////////////////////

E.9. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MARR, SHUM, PFOR, SN
SUBJECT: P-3'S AND VIETNAMESE REFUGEES

REFS: (A) SINGAPORE 5023; (B) STATE 269092

1. IN MY CONVERSATION WITH FOREIGN MINISTER RAJARATNAM NOVEMBER 16 I CONSIDERED IT DESIRABLE TO LET HIM KNOW THAT THE MATTERS AGREED TO BY PRIME MINISTER LEE KUAN YEW IN WASHINGTON LAST MONTH WERE NOT BEING LEFT TO LANGUISH BY THE U.S. SIDE BUT WERE BEING MOVED ACTIVELY ALONG.

2. ON P-3 STAGING, I SAID I UNDERSTOOD THAT THE CONSULTATIONS WHICH PRIME MINISTER LEE WANTED US TO CONDUCT WITH APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN HAD BEEN INITIATED, AND THAT NO OBJECTIONS ON THEIR PART HAD BEEN NOTED. I THEREFORE EXPECTED THAT WE IN SINGAPORE WOULD PROBABLY BE HEARING MORE ON THIS SUBJECT FROM WASHINGTON IN THE NOT-TOO-DISTANT FUTURE. RAJA INDICATED THAT HE WAS FAMILIAR WITH THE P-3 ISSUE, BUT MADE NO COMMENT.

3. WITH RESPECT TO THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFER TO PROVIDE FACILITIES FOR TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION OF VIETNAMESE REFUGEES, I SAID THAT WHILE THIS WAS OF COURSE PRIMARILY SOMETHING TO BE WORKED OUT BETWEEN SINGAPORE AND THE UNHCR, WE REMAINED VERY INTERESTED IN FOLLOWING THE PRO-

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GRESS OF THE MATTER. I HAD HEARD THAT SAFRUDDIN ALY KHAN WOULD BE VISITING WASHINGTON SHORTLY, AND I ASSUMED THAT DISCUSSIONS WOULD INCLUDE THIS TOPIC. AGAIN RAJA INDICATED KNOWLEDGE OF THE SUBJECT BUT OFFERED NO COMMENT.

4. SINGAPOREANS DON'T LIKE SURPRISES, WHICH IS ONE REASON IN RAISED THESE TOPICS WITH RAJA. IN ADDITION, I BELIEVE THAT

WE WILL NEED TO KEEP THE HEAT APPLIED ON THE REFUGEE QUESTION
IN ORDER TO HELP PULL TOGETHER ALL THE DIVERSE THREADS. PENDING
RESOLUTION OF THE UNHCR-SINGAPORE DISCUSSIONS, OUR FRIENDS HERE
WILL CONTINUE TO GO ABOUT BUSINESS IN THE USUAL WAY, I.E.
BY PUSHING VIETNAMESE REFUGEE BOATS BACK INTO THE SOUTH CHINA
SEA. MY FRENCH COLLEAGUE TELLS ME THAT ONE SUCH INCIDENT OCCURRED
ON NOVEMBER 12, WHEN A BOAT WITH 19 PERSONS ABOARD WAS PUSHED AWAY.
(IT PROBABLY HEADED FOR TANJUNG PINANG.) HOWEVER, THE SINGAPORE
AUTHORITIES DID INFORM THE FRENCH AND OFFER TO PROVIDE ACCESS,
BUT IT WAS A SATURDAY AND THE EMBASSY WAS CLOSED.
HOLDRIDGE

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